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ABSTRACT

Local boards of education have the responsibility and authority for operating local school systems, but in a system of any size authority must be delegated. Unlike factories, schools cannot be run from the top down. The health of the schools is determined directly by and in proportion to the extent that principals and teachers have a voice in decision-making. Within the system, authority and responsibility must be more evenly distributed and community input brought into the system. (MLF)

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AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY—A NEED TO RESHUFFLE THE DECK

Willard R. Lane

American education is probably as good or better than education any place else in the world. The American educational system is unique in the world because of (1) its extreme decentralization compared to other countries (with the possible exception of some provinces in Canada) and (2) its commitment to provide an equal educational opportunity to every child regardless of his/her ability, social position, race, creed, or color. The American commitment to these two educational goals is an enormous undertaking. Its decentralized structure and commitment to all children is costly, demanding, and open to influences that can be characterized as being divergent and at cross-purposes. The system, more than any other country's in the world, is open to societal conflicts, personal desires of families, and whims of special interest groups.

In spite of seemingly raging controversies and conflicting expectations surrounding the schools, a visit to our schools reveals that teaching and learning are taking place and that most school systems are operating as effectively and as efficiently as the environment and local situations will allow.

The decentralization of education in the United States is the unique strength of the educational system, and local control is the hallmark of democracy. Decentralization has meant the delegation of authority for operating the schools and shared responsibility by all for the quality of education produced in these schools.

The Delegation of Authority and Responsibility

Delegation of authority and responsibility is both a political and organizational concept. Politically, it can be viewed in the following ways: (1) The federal government has no constitutional authority over education. (Education is not mentioned in the Constitution.) (2) Authority and responsibility for education are vested in each of the 50 states. (3) Each of the states, with the exception of Hawaii, has delegated much or most of the authority and responsibility for operating schools to approximately 16,000 local school boards in the nation.

Authority can be delegated, but responsibility cannot. At best, it must be shared. A study of the history of local boards of education reveals that while their authority has changed over the years, their responsibility has not. This has led to frustration at times as states have pulled back the authority they once delegated to boards in such areas as financial management, teacher certification, and authority to decide minimum student academic progress.

Even the federal government, which has no constitutional authority, finds itself in the position of having to assume responsibility for the welfare of the nation in such areas as national defense and other constitutional issues decided upon by the U.S. Supreme Court.

The U.S. Congress has interceded (usually with money) to address national and international issues because the 16,000 local boards are more concerned primarily with local issues. In the case of the courts and their interpretation of the Constitution, they have placed increased responsibility on the states and local boards. Many times federal monies did not follow U.S. Supreme Court decisions because, as far as the Court was concerned, it was a state and local responsibility. Thus, these bodies were expected to use their authority to act. At the national level education has not received across-the-board support, and court decisions have been aimed at special segments of the educational program and support systems.

States and local boards have called "foul" because of the courts' interference with local authority. They have increased responsibility without sufficient means to carry out the mandate. What it all comes down to is that the local board of education has the responsibility and authority for operating local systems. The local board now finds itself in the position of having to delegate authority to and share responsibility with professionals in the school organization.

Fulfilling Responsibility through Accountability—The Administrative Dilemma

How can professionals be held accountable? The demands are complex and often at cross-purposes. The thrust of this paper is that boards are reluctant to delegate authority to teachers and principals. It is the teacher who often lacks the authority to control the quality of the educational program and the effectiveness of learning.

Perhaps no two words have been as overworked as "effectiveness" and "efficiency." These words are not the same, but are so overworked and overplayed in American industrial history that they are often used incorrectly to mean the same thing. Can an organization be effective and not efficient? The answer is, of course, yes. Can an organization be efficient and not effective? The answer is, again, yes. The American school system grew up in an industrial society in which big industry was the hallmark of effectiveness and efficiency. The school system of America

was judged by business and industrial standards. Its very organization was, especially at the local level, modeled after the industrial model. Produce a product as cheaply as possible and, yet, satisfy the consumer enough so that he/she will buy more. In a free enterprise tradition this made good sense when applied to local schools. In industry, the nature and kind of product and its quality were the responsibility of management.

In the schools, the "kind" of education that students receive is the key. Is it "good"? Are we getting our dollar's worth? With the increase in expenditures in education which came about through increasing costs, came the cry for accountability. Suddenly, accountability became the password. Renewed interest in objective measures was demanded.

Meanwhile, courts and laws were demanding that major portions of time, money, and effort had to be devoted to meeting additional requirements beyond the "measurable basics" in integration, nonsexist education, education for the handicapped, multicultural education, and so on. Achievement tests did not measure the results of this effort.

The Nation Has a Responsibility

At the national level it became apparent that education was essential for national defense, especially after the first Soviet Sputnik went up in 1957. Money for upgrading math and science, as well as money for guidance, became available. Massive amounts of money were spent on the upgrading of mathematics and science materials as well as upgrading of math and science teachers. Thousands of math and science teachers took advantage of the hundreds of workshops made available through federal funds (one of the few times in the history of American education when programs were devised for and by professional teachers to upgrade themselves). The new science programs were a success in terms of more young people going into them, the increased value of science and mathematics teachers to business and industry seeking them out and employing them, and our apparent technical ability to stay in the "space race." It became the school's responsibility to: (1) integrate cities and communities which were discriminating against Blacks and later all minorities; (2) provide all children who were heretofore relegated to the status of uneducable to an open access and a free environment to advance as far as they could in an environment which did not restrict them; (3) operationalize civil rights through demonstrating that due process was afforded to all and that discrimination or implications of it were removed from all textbooks, especially in the areas of sex and race; and (4) to start removing from all courses of study about 2,000 years of traditions relating to women and men in the home and the work place. Thousands of hours of teacher and administrator effort have been spent on these new objectives at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Little or no financial aid was offered to accomplish the above. Yet, the hue and cry in the nation is for better performance in the basics. We have taken man hours and money that might have been spent on the basics and redirected them. The point is that the four major objectives set forth above are not necessarily bad, but what have we done to put an equal effort (manpower and money) into the basics?

The Teacher—The One with the Least Authority and Most Responsibility

Writers, most of the time, start a discussion of the delegation of authority and responsibilities to the superintendent of schools. In too many cases discussion of authority and responsibility stops at that point, and the discussion turns to the management of principals and teachers. In this discussion, I wish to start with teachers. The reasons are simple: (1) teaching children is

what school is all about, and (2) the teacher has the greatest amount of responsibility and the least amount of authority in the entire system.

The history of American educational administration has shown that teachers have little to say about policy as it affects the teacher-student learning relations (class size is an example). Teachers have little authority over what the system does instructionally and how programs are organized. They have no authority in deciding who gets into teaching either as a profession or into the local school system. They are expected to execute educational programs in which they have limited input or chance to evaluate. Any failure is seen as the fault of the teacher, not of the program. As important as teachers are to the educational process, this importance is not reflected in the educational organization or in teachers' salaries. Teacher input into the nature of teacher development programs is far too small.

Human resources are the most expensive part of any business or school organization. The history of American business and labor has been an adversarial one since the days of Henry Ford. It was easier to justify the purchase of new machines or the repair of an old one than it has been to justify the pay, maintenance, and care of a work force. The experiments in the Hawthorne plant graphically demonstrated to Western Electric that if people were treated like human beings, and felt a part of the common cause, they would be more productive. Even though Western Electric hoped to demonstrate that lighting could control behavior, they found the human element more important than the mechanical manipulation of human relations.

The Hawthorne experiment spawned a new era in human relations. Business and industry, being interested in profit, set about doing things to prove that the organization cared for the workers. Bowling teams, baseball diamonds, and other manipulatory activities were created. The workers didn't buy these "altruistic" motives. They knew management was more interested in profit than in them. What management missed was that people *do want responsibility and authority* and some control over their own lives and the work they do.

American educational organizations were developed on the human and industrial model. As an administrator, this writer remembers the recipes for improving human relations: such things as using teacher committees, even though the board of education never saw or were never aware of the results, and manipulating teachers into the idea that they had a part in the show, even though they had little or no part in the decisions. Administrators spoke for the system and expressed concern about quality along with the board, but teachers were not consulted.

From the days of Mary Parker Follet, one of the earliest writers in the human relations movement, to the present administrative theory based on sociological, psychological, and political science research, the bottom line is that personal dignity is built by having responsibility and authority in helping the organization meet its goals. The decision-making process in which teachers play a major role must be clarified.

The School Administrator

In the industrial model, decisions are made at the top by key management people and passed down to the workers. Today's administrator is placed in a difficult situation. On the one hand, he/she is placed in the tradition of a school system organized on the industrial model, while on the other hand he/she is managing a professional organization.

A school system is composed primarily of professionals, not unskilled or skilled workers. A profession is defined here as a special area of learning that requires a long period of academic study and command of a "bit of tools" that no one else has except

those who have studied in the profession. The profession of teaching is broken down into specialties such as reading, English, physics, foreign languages, mathematics, and so on. A teaching license implies three things: (1) knowledge of subject matter, (2) knowledge of psychology of learning and child development, and (3) a methodology based on this knowledge. Another characteristic of all professionals is that they tend to identify with national and state organizations related to the subject and that they practice (such as the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics, the National Council for Reading, or the National Council for Social Studies).

Theorists in educational organization and management have questioned whether industrial and business management theory ought to be the basis for research on school systems. While some of it might apply, some authors¹ have questioned whether the school organization is like an industrial or business organization. Yet, most of the studies seem to have made this assumption. Some writers suggest that a school system should be described as a loosely coupled system because teachers and lower-echelon administrators are not as closely supervised as their counterparts in an industrial bureaucracy.

The problem is that boards of education want a highly structured system because so many members come from business and industrial management background; the industrial, tightly controlled organization is what they perceive as needed. Boards are reluctant to delegate to teachers any role in policy development or policy execution. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, to accomplish in a school system instructional goals that have meaning and sparkle.

There are several reasons why school systems cannot be controlled from the top down. Let's take an example of the "International Widget" Company. The top management knows how to make widgets, top management decides the color of the widget, the size of the widget, the quality of the widget, and the ultimate price of the widget. In business and industry these are management prerogatives. The workers are expected to conform to management's standards and decisions. If the workers of the company are organized into a union, they may bargain on such things as salary and working conditions, but never on items pertaining to the widget. These are management prerogatives. Management prerogatives are more or less easily defined. Herein lies the problem in modern school organization. The widget becomes learning, and teachers are the professionals who have control over knowledge of subject matter and proper methods.

The top of the organization does not have sufficient knowledge of every subject which ranges from the arts and sciences to vocational education to special education programs. The literature tends to lump teaching and teachers together as a whole and hopes the same methodology will hold true for any subject. The rage today is for a particular in-service program which claims that the use of learning psychology and psychological methods will apply across any subject matter. It is popular because administration and supervision from the top hopes that if administrators can get this background they can help teachers. This may have an element of truth in it; but the simple question is, can an administrator who knows nothing about French even identify where the right content is being reinforced? Can an administrator identify the appropriate teaching strategies for calculus?

The individual teacher has become the focal point of accountability. This writer has examined hundreds of evaluation instruments (of course, we must have an instrument). The first thing that is noticeable is that items used on many evaluation instruments are very similar to those used by hotels to evaluate bartenders. Most of these instruments do not separate teachers from other populations. No one can argue that a person who

can't get along with parents and children is a poor teacher. The same could be said of people who are uncooperative, don't follow school rules, are lazy, and do not prepare or care about what they are doing. It has been estimated that this constitutes about one or two percent of the population.

However, if the license to teach is evidence that the teacher has (1) a strong knowledge of the subject matter, (2) a strong background of educational psychology and learning theory, and (3) has demonstrated that he/she can use this knowledge to develop a methodology appropriate to the background and development of each individual child, the evaluator who is a generalist is in a difficult position.

Another problem facing administrators is the perception held that by evaluating individuals confidentially and independently of each other, the evaluations tell something about the quality of the educational program. If an educational program or subpart of it (such as social studies) is somehow lacking, evaluating individuals is probably not the way to improve the program. A good program is probably greater than the sum of its parts. A program lacking in content and precise objectives demands the work of the faculty as a whole. Individual teacher evaluation does not address the whole program.

What constitutes a good program in mathematics? Who are the best people to involve in the evaluation and change of a program in mathematics? Probably not the principal, assistant superintendent, or other generalists in the organization. It is probably the mathematics teachers who know both the content and the kinds of experiences needed by the various types of students in the school system. If they need help, it is probably from someone who has a good background in mathematics and methods.

Developing a Sense of Ownership

Unfortunately, teachers, by and large, do not have a strong sense of ownership over their work. They have, historically, not had an opportunity to develop a sense of ownership because their role has generally been one of marginal involvement. Educational administration has always been taught as a "top-down" administrative scheme rather than basing it on the classroom and classroom organization. A decision mechanism is needed which provides for a bottom-up approach for educational planning, change, and improvement. The problem with administration as taught in colleges and universities has been that decision-making mechanisms have not been researched and developed that insure that decisions about the organization and implementation of the curriculum and many other school policies coming from those in the teacher-learner relationship. This would not change the responsibility of the board of education, but it would certainly change how decisions were made. Administrators' jobs would change and probably be enhanced.

A "sense of ownership" is usually closely related to a sense of pride. Professionals tend to get their cues about what constitutes a good program, say social studies, from the professional associations such as the National Council of Social Studies or the State Council of Social Studies. One of the professors at The University of Iowa, who is a strong force in both of these councils, indicates that membership is declining. If this is true of the other professional organizations, it is a bad omen for education, for it may mean that fewer teachers are really concerned about how they teach and how the best programs can be developed for a given school system. Constant contact with the professional subject organization, whether it is reading, language arts, mathematics, or science, gives the teachers some basis for either being proud of their own school system, satisfied with it, or critical of it and waiting to do something about it.

Developing a sense of ownership is not easy, especially in a

system where things have historically been handed down from the top. As an example, consider present employment practices. If teachers have worked hard and long in developing a program of studies, they ought to have some input into who is hired, and be able to determine the extent to which the people who are interviewed understand and "buy into" the program that these teachers have developed. Do they know their field? Does the prospect have the background to develop methodology to fit into the program?

The principal and the teachers are the key people in employment. The personnel department can be a service agency. This writer has had experience with one school system where the board has a policy whereby prospective teachers must have approval from (1) two teachers in the area of the teaching assignment, (2) the endorsement of the principal, and (3) recommendation of the superintendent before employment. Compare this with school systems where the teacher is not even involved in the selection of an aide who is working for and with the teacher.

Emphasis on Organizational Development

The concept of organizational development is one used in modern organizations. In fact, the business organizations listed among the top in the country are characterized by the amount of money spent on research and development and organizational development. Organizational development is seen as a collection of many people with various kinds of skills working together to keep the organization as a high-quality organization through research, training, and continuing education.

School systems spend little money on organizational development. Most of this is accomplished through sending administrators, coordinators, and supervisors to conferences. While this is good, it is not enough. First, these people are usually generalists. Second, it puts the organization into the position of giving ideas to people in the hierarchy who may fully grasp what has been said, but may become the basis for an in-service program in which teachers may or may not need the work. This often happens when the front-line people are left out of the decision-making process.

One school superintendent in Iowa has recently suggested to his board of education that they set aside approximately \$100,000 to implement a certain program in which he and others in the organization feel will help teachers improve. Some of the teachers and principals have already had the training. This is a giant step in the right direction in terms of organizational development. Without judging the merits of the program, it is among the first school districts in Iowa that comes to this writer's attention in which the idea of investing in the organization has been proposed. As you might guess, it wasn't the board that objected. It was a number of teachers who did not like the program. Perhaps, there is never a situation in which a 100 percent will go along with an idea, but it is likely that if the proposal had been made by the chief administrator with faculty committee involvement and approved, the administrator would have had a stronger case. As of this date the board has not acted. Even if they do not go along with the superintendent's recommendation, he has set a healthy example for others to follow.

In-service education programs are under severe attack by teachers and other educators. An *Education Week*² headline reads: "No Direction, No Accountability. Why the In-service System Breakdown?" One of the reasons reported is "that they lack both relevance and quality." Another reason may be that in-service programs are not "job related," except in a very indirect way. A teacher who is teaching reading and would like to find out some new or better ways of teaching it would probably not be too excited about an in-service education program on developing a

taxonomy of educational objectives. To make in-service programming viable, teachers must be involved. The program may be macro in terms of a topic involving all teachers or micro in terms of a topic related to a specific problem in a given area involving very few teachers.

School districts for many years have given salary increments to teachers who finish an M.A. or a Ph.D. Sometimes these degrees are not at all related to the school system's needs or a specific position. If the teacher bears the cost, then this brings up the question of whether a teacher who pays for his/her own advanced degree should have to take courses related to the specific teaching position or area. If the school organization is selecting courses which pertain to the job, then it should pay for the cost of attending these courses. If the teacher decides to get an M.A. or Ph.D. and pays for it himself/herself and it is not in the area of teaching, it is doubtful if this should be recognized as being of value to the organization, and also questioned whether it justifies a salary increase.

It is unfortunate that so many certification requirements and so many requirements for getting ahead on a salary schedule involve college credit. Very few, if any, college courses are aimed at the needs of a particular teacher or a particular teacher in a particular district.

The December 8 issue of *Education Week* contains an article by Deborah Hughes entitled, "A Threatened Pittsburgh School Becomes a Center for Renewal."² Beginning next September, 50 high school teachers will check out of their home schools and spend nine weeks with pay at a teacher center rejuvenating themselves. Eventually, all 750 high school teachers in the system will participate in the program. It will cost the school board between 1 million and 1.5 million dollars a year to keep the center open. It was started with a \$119,000 grant from the Ford Foundation. The goal of the center is to make teachers aware of such fundamentals as identifying an objective and teaching toward it, monitoring students' responses, and adjusting techniques accordingly. Another exciting idea is a comment made by the director of the center, Judy Johnson, who said: "I hope to provide each teacher with the time to do independent research. If a teacher wants to learn something like technical writing, then the center will make contact for that person to work at a university or company." The exciting idea to this writer is that the felt needs of only one individual will be met which make this individual's contribution to the organization more valuable.

The Pittsburgh idea is a pacesetter. This writer is sure that for the program to pay off, it will be necessary to readjust principal-teacher relations, and teacher-teacher relations when they get back on the job. One of the problems of the past has been that teachers have been sent to workshops in group dynamics, human relations, and so on, and have gone back to a school organization that has not changed one "whit." It should also be noted that Cedar Rapids, Iowa, had an imaginative program developed whereby teachers could take seminars, classes, or have other experiences taught by other staff teachers on problems that the teachers in the system felt were important. Much to the credit of the Department of Public Instruction, these could be used for renewing licenses and also would be recognized by the Cedar Rapids School System on the salary schedule advancement.

The Principalship—A Key Position

The principal is the most important administrator. The principal is the key to the implementation of any changes in policies which affect the educational program, the voice of the teachers, and the educational needs of the districts. It is time that we stop referring to principals as the "Principal of Building X or Y" or of "George Washington High." The very title connotes nothing. The principal is, in fact, the principal administrator of a given fac-

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ulty. The origin of the word "principal" comes from the title "principal teacher" during a time when a principal taught classes and had added administrative responsibilities.

When we use "principal administrator" of a given group of faculty, we infer also the principal administrator of the educational program and all the aspects surrounding a given faculty regarding personnel administration, community relations, and student-teacher relations. The principal of a faculty must have input into the policies of the board, the hiring process, and be the chief instigator and implementer of the decision structure which taps the faculty. His/her job is similar to a college dean.

The principal is the administrator closest to the faculty of the school. School policy ought to reflect this and allow the principal to be a faculty program advocate. When it comes to the educational process, the principal is the one who can or ought to be able to interpret the effects of various policies on the faculty and the educational program that he/she represents. One of the things that mitigates against the principal being the principal spokesman for a given faculty is the assumption that all faculties in all schools ought to be doing the same thing or very nearly the same thing; thus some central director or assistant superintendent makes the decisions.

In a policy resource paper prepared by Research for Better Schools, Inc.,⁴ Heathers is quoted as concluding "that the perceived failure of innovations to achieve their goals was due to inadequate patterns of implementation (emphasis added) in schools that were testing them, rather than to flaws in the innovations themselves." The paper goes on to say that the health of the local school as an organization, along with the expertise and commitment of the staff are the most critical variables in reforming education.

The health of the organization is determined directly and in proportion to the extent that principals and teachers have a voice in decision making. This will never happen until decision making is held accountable to the faculty and those above them in the organization.

School board policy is very apt to state that the principal reports to the superintendent, assistant superintendent, or director. The real power of the principal and the authority which he/she has is not clearly defined. Authority must be delegated. If the principal has little or no authority, there is little to delegate to the faculty which is substantively and educationally relevant.

Too often principals treat the faculty the way principals have been treated. An example of this is the employment of a teacher's aide. The teacher's aide is directly responsible to the teacher, yet in a great majority of cases the aide is employed and assigned by the principal to the teacher without the teacher having any part in the employment process.

Perhaps the sign observed on a principal's desk which read: "If you are looking for someone with little authority, you are in the right place; I have about as little as you can get" pretty well sums up the situation of the principals of many faculties. A parent should be able to turn to the principal or the faculty member concerned when a child has problems in the school.

Some principals want authority commensurate with their roles; others do not. In a particular school system that was studied by a class at The University of Iowa, the superintendent of schools was developing a "team concept" in organization. Under this concept the principals were given authority to make many decisions including those dealing with parents and teachers. The team concept can make the individual players in the organization become very visible, especially if they drop the ball. Suddenly, principals found that they were to make decisions and develop policies with their own staff and were responsi-

ble. Most of the principals liked the new scheme; others were intimidated by it. They preferred calling the central office and getting an answer—so they could tell the parent the central office says this is what we must do. They didn't want either the responsibility or authority.

The School Board Is the Source of Local Legal Authority

The American school board is unique in the world in terms of the authority and the responsibility that it has in the operation of schools. The state has delegated a major portion of its responsibility and authority to the local boards of education. When the board is in legal session the board members are considered state officers acting on behalf of the state. Local authority has eroded either because local boards could not or refused to assume responsibility. In spite of changing state and federal controls, the local school board is still the most powerful body at the local level. It serves as the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of government when it comes to the operation of the school district.

At the local level most of the authority regarding personnel and instruction rests with the local board. In the operation of the local school system the local board has the same problem that all administrators face in the system—that is the necessity to share responsibility and to delegate the necessary authority to a school administrator (the superintendent) to carry out the desires of the public and the profession concerning educational programs, teachers, students, and parents. The main problem is that all authority for local operations rests with the board of education. Administrators (superintendents, principals, teachers) have only the authority delegated to them by the board. If the nature of the authority, the kinds of authority, and the bounds of authority are not clearly defined, then the entire school operation will lack direction and cohesiveness, and planning comes to a standstill.

Policy making is the most important function of the board of education. Policies must be consistent with state law and the state and federal constitutions. Policy development is a hard and arduous task. Luvern Cunningham, in a special lecture to the National Conference of Professors of Educational Administration,⁵ suggests that "boards meet four times a year for extended periods of time (two or three days) in order to gain full command of policy related data and knowledge, have time to reflect and consider the views of the citizens in regard to policies under consideration."

Cunningham suggests that boards "reflect and consider the views of citizens." The views of citizens are paramount; however, about ten percent of the eligible voters get out and vote in school board elections. More will come out for bond elections. The American school system is governed by a narrow spectrum of society, sometimes known as the "school crowd." Real issues are seldom raised in school board elections, but the "in" group knows. There are problems in getting the viewpoints of business, labor, industry, and other groups in the community. Broad community control and interest is declining because of the increasing number of households without children (Des Moines reports about one in 24 households have children in school). Many school board members who represent special interest groups do not see themselves representing all of the people in the community. Even the best boards must realize groups pressuring them are often special interest groups that do not view the long-term good of the entire community or really represent the community as a whole.

Concern about the quality of education goes far beyond those persons who have children in school. Yet, in many communities an unwritten rule seems to exist that unless a person has children

in the school, he/she should not run for the school board. Part of this is accounted for by the fact that a major source of school board members are persons who have been active in organizations such as the PTO. This is not the fault of the PTO, but a part of the times.

Another faulty idea is that school board members should limit themselves to a given set of terms. In a study done by the American Association of School Administrators,⁶ it was reported that one of the frustrations of school superintendents is the rapid turnover of board members. This is not surprising because an essential part of administration is planning. One of the frustrations of administrators is that they find themselves spending hundreds of hours collecting information and working with the board on plans (such as a curriculum plan) which might be expected to be in place for a 10- or 12-year period (with modifications). If, as time goes by, the administration finds that it is faced with a majority of new board members who do not understand the plan, the process begins again.

Lack of stability on the board is a major cause of lack of stability in the school organization. The same thing can be said of the superintendency. Constant turnover of board members may seem to the outside viewer as good, but to the organization itself it means lack of stability, lack of long-term planning, and lack of a persistent and consistent effort to concentrate on educational goals.

Through board policy the school board controls the destiny of the school organization. Because, as mentioned earlier, policy making is time consuming, boards have looked for "short cuts." College and university educational administration departments as well as state school board associations have developed "model policies books" with the hope that these would help school boards. It has been disappointing to find out that the "model policies," developed around a hypothetical school, have been used almost verbatim as the policy manual by many local school districts.

Summary

School policies should define the decision-making process regarding all school personnel and how they would be involved in critical decision processes. The thing that must be reflected in school policy is that schools cannot be run from the top down. While the superintendent must be given authority, what are the decision-making policies? Teachers are professionals. What is their role in the decision-making process? What is the role of the principal? What is the role of the superintendent?

In a school system of any size, authority must be delegated down the line, and the decision-making process must be defined. In this day and age with critical shortages of resources, the problems facing the schools are too great to fail to capitalize on all of the knowledgeable within the school organization and to fail to involve a broader spectrum of the public in policy development. How salary and working conditions are set is quite apart from meeting educational demands of today and raising the quality of education in Iowa and across the nation.

Stability is needed in our school systems in order to systematically develop goals and means to achieve them. Within the system authority and responsibility must be more evenly distributed. The people in the community from every sector must be brought closer to the system. Without the support of every phase of our society, the schools will decrease in their effectiveness. Who is responsible in quality education? All of us. Who has the authority to carry out the program? Relatively few. It is time to reshuffle the deck—to delegate more authority to teachers and principals who are the professionals closest to the learning process.

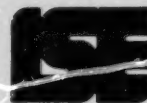
FOOTNOTES

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